

**AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS**

This listing of claims replaces all prior listing of claims in this application.

1. (Canceled).

2. (Previously presented) The method of claim 8 wherein the wet oxidation process is performed at a temperature in a range of about 450 °C to about 750 °C.

3. (Previously presented) The method of claim 8 wherein the wet oxidation process is performed at a temperature in a range of about 750 °C to 950 °C.

4. (Previously presented) The method of claim 8 wherein the oxidation process is carried out for a duration in a range of about 20 to about 60 seconds.

5. (Previously presented) The method of claim 8 wherein the ratio of hydrogen to oxygen gases in the mixture is in the range of about 0.1 to about 0.5.

Claims 6-7 (Canceled).

8. (Currently amended) A method of fabricating a semiconductor device comprising:

depositing an oxygen-deficient dielectric film having a dielectric constant of at least about 25 over a semiconductor substrate;

subjecting the dielectric film to a densifying treatment to stabilize said film by heating said semiconductor substrate;

subjecting ~~the~~ said stabilized dielectric film to a wet oxidation with steam process provided by heating a mixture of hydrogen and oxygen gases in a rapid thermal process chamber at a temperature of at least about 450°C, ~~said steam provided~~

~~in a ratio of at least 0.005 relative to other gases present in the rapid thermal process chamber,~~ wherein the ratio of hydrogen to oxygen gases in the mixture is in the range of about 0.1 to about 0.8,~~and wherein the dielectric film undergoes wet oxidation with only a mixture of hydrogen and oxygen gases that form steam and wherein the pressure of said rapid thermal process chamber is held at about atmospheric pressure;~~  
and

subjecting the dielectric film to a second heat treatment in an ambient comprising a stabilizing gas selected from the group consisting of N<sub>2</sub>, O<sub>2</sub>, O<sub>3</sub>, NO, and N<sub>2</sub>O.

Claims 9-10 (Canceled).

11. (Currently amended) The method of claim 8 wherein the wet oxidation is performed at a temperature less than the temperature of said second heat treatment ~~for subjecting the dielectric film to a heat treatment in an ambient comprising a stabilizing gas.~~

12. (Previously presented) The method of claim 8 wherein subjecting the dielectric film to a heat treatment in an ambient comprising a stabilizing gas is performed in the rapid thermal process chamber.

Claims 13-41 (Canceled).

42. (Currently amended) A method of fabricating a semiconductor device comprising:

depositing an oxygen-deficient dielectric film having a dielectric constant of at least about 25 over a semiconductor substrate;

subjecting the dielectric film to a densifying treatment to stabilize said film by heating said semiconductor substrate; and

subjecting the stabilized dielectric film to a wet oxidation with steam process provided by heating a mixture of ~~only~~ hydrogen and oxygen gases in a rapid thermal process chamber at a temperature of at least about 450°C ~~and for a duration which increases the oxygen content of the dielectric film, said steam provided in a ratio of at least 0.005 relative to other gases present in the rapid thermal process chamber; and~~

~~subjecting the dielectric film to a heat treatment in an ambient comprising a stabilizing gas selected from the group consisting of N<sub>2</sub>, O<sub>2</sub>, O<sub>3</sub>, NO, and N<sub>2</sub>O.~~

43. (Canceled).

44. (Currently amended) A method of fabricating a semiconductor device comprising:

depositing an oxygen-deficient dielectric film having a dielectric constant of at least about 25 over a semiconductor substrate;

subjecting the dielectric film to a densifying treatment to stabilize said film by heating said semiconductor substrate;

subjecting the stabilized dielectric film to a wet oxidation with steam process provided by heating a mixture of hydrogen and oxygen gases in a rapid thermal process chamber at a temperature of at least about 450°C ~~and for a duration which increases the oxygen content of the dielectric film, said steam provided in a ratio of at least 0.005 relative to other gases present in the rapid thermal process chamber, wherein~~ said hydrogen and oxygen gases are combined in said rapid thermal process chamber and said rapid thermal process chamber has a pressure of around 1 millitorr; and

subjecting the dielectric film to a second heat treatment in an ambient comprising a stabilizing gas selected from the group consisting of N<sub>2</sub>, O<sub>2</sub>, O<sub>3</sub>, NO, and N<sub>2</sub>O.

Claims 45-47 (Canceled).